

*News From U.S. Senator*

*North Dakota*

# Byron L. Dorgan

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## **DORGAN PUSHES "BROADBAND REA BILL" TO CONNECT RURAL STATES TO INTERNET**

(FARGO, ND) — U.S. Senator Byron L. Dorgan said today that he is working to build support in Congress for his legislation designed to bring broadband Internet capacity to all rural areas of the U.S.

Dorgan, speaking at an information technology conference he organized in Fargo, today said that there are some exciting new technologies that will help bring broadband Internet capabilities to some rural areas. But in the end, he believes it will take a national program similar to the old Rural Electrification Act (REA) program that brought electricity to America's farms and small towns, if we're going to avoid leaving some areas behind in the new information technology age.

Dorgan said that his bill, S. 2307 - the Rural Broadband Enhancement Act, has gathered the support of members of organizations such as the National Association of Rural Utilities Commissioners and the Association for Local Telecommunications Services

"The term broadband refers to the size of the 'pipes' through which data flows," Dorgan said. "These data pipes can be wires, or wireless, and we will have both technologies in our state in the future. But it is certain that no area of the country will attract economic development in the years ahead if it does not have the infrastructure that includes broadband connections to the Internet. Some rural areas will inevitably be left behind unless we have a national goal of a universal build-out of this technology."

Other speakers at the conference in Fargo today included John D. Zeglis, Chairman and CEO of AT&T Wireless, and Gene Hoffman, the founder of Emusic.com. They told the nearly 600 people who attended the conference about the opportunities and challenges for a rural state in the information technology age.

Dorgan, who is a member of the Senate Commerce Committee and also sits on the Communications Subcommittee, was one of the authors of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, which has both caused and allowed many of the changes in the information industry in recent years.

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